

2003 N.D. Department of Human Services Fact Sheet

Vulnerable Adult Protective Services

Background:

The North Dakota Legislature passed the Vulnerable Adult Protective Services Law in 1989. The law authorized the Department of Human Services to develop, administer, and implement a program of protective services for vulnerable adults.

In 1998, each regional human service center began developing Elder Services Units, which are responsible for vulnerable adult protective services, as well as other services.

Protection of vulnerable adults seeks to prevent further abuse, neglect, or exploitation and to promote self-care and independence.

State Law:

In state law, a vulnerable adult is defined as any person older than age 18, or emancipated by marriage who has a substantial mental or functional impairment.

ND Century Code 50-25.2-03 states that any person who reasonably believes that a vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observes conditions or circumstances that reasonably would result in abuse or neglect, may report the information to the department or to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

The law gives the department the right to assess and to provide or arrange the provision of adult protective services, if the vulnerable adult consents to and accepts the services. The department may pursue administrative, legal, or other remedies authorized by law, which are necessary and appropriate under the circumstances to protect a vulnerable adult who cannot give consent, and to prevent further abuse or neglect.

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• Demographic Characteristics • How Calls Are Handled • Guiding Principles

Statistics:

Vulnerable Adult Services

(October 2002 – September 2003)

- 527 New Cases*
- 555 Information and Referral Calls
- 184 Brief Services (required up to 2 hours of staff time to resolve, for example, helping a family locate needed services.)
- 530 Cases Closed
- Hours spent on information & referral, brief services, and cases totaled 7,922 hours

*NOTE: A new case does not mean the person has not been served before. Recidivism is common. As physical and other abilities change over time, a formerly stable situation may deteriorate and concerns about neglect or abuse may resurface.

Referral Reasons

- 63% Self-neglect
- 17% Neglect
- 11% Abuse
- 9% Financial exploitation

Referral Sources

- 21% Agency
- 29% Medical/Home Health
- 19% Family
- 19% Community
- 7% Legal/Judicial
- 5% Self

Priority of Request

- 83% Non-emergency
- 11% Emergency
- 6% Imminent danger

Did You Know:

Adult children, other family members, church communities, and other informal support systems help meet the needs of many people. Persons who receive vulnerable adult protective services often lack these informal supports.

October 2002 – September 2003

Vulnerable Adult Protective Services Statistics

Demographic Information:

General

- 72% were age 60 and older
- 60% were female
- 95% were Caucasian
- 3% were American Indian/Native Alaskan

Marital Status

- 67% single/widow/widower
- 22% married
- 10% divorced
- 1% separated

Living Arrangements

- 54% live alone
- 39% live with a spouse or other family member
- 7% live with non-relatives

Alzheimer's and Related Dementia

- 71% Did not have dementia
- 29% Do have some sort of dementia

Reasons for Case Closure:

- 21% Referred to another agency
- 13% Moved out of the area, received protective arrangements, or died
- 17% Client refused services
- 13% Placed in long-term care facility
- 8% Referred to home & community-based services
- 28% Other

Another Resource:

North Dakota Senior Info Line

1-800-451-8693

www.ndseniorinfo.com

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Adult Protection in Practice:

- A vulnerable adult has the right to make decisions on his or her own behalf until he or she delegates responsibility voluntarily to another, or the court grants responsibility to another.
- When interests compete, a competent individual's decision supercedes community concerns about safety, landlord concerns about property, or family concerns about health or finances.
- A person can choose to live "in harm" or even self-destructively, if she or he is competent to choose, does not harm others, and commits no crimes. (During the 2002 federal fiscal year, 15 percent of the people offered vulnerable adult protective services in N.D. refused them.)
- Protection of vulnerable adults seeks to prevent further abuse, neglect, or exploitation and to promote self-care and independence.

How Calls Are Handled:

When a Regional Human Service Center receives a call about suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults:

- Staff assess the situation via phone to determine if an emergency exists.
- Staff contact emergency responders, if appropriate.
- If it is not an emergency, but requires more than providing information and referral, staff may conduct a site visit to assess the situation and assure appropriate services are offered.
- If appropriate, staff may offer services to the vulnerable person such as home-delivered meals, personal care assistance, respite care, or other services.

Human Service Center Contacts:

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|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Williston | 701-774-4600 | 800-231-7724 |
| Minot | 701-857-8500 | 888-470-6968 |
| Devils Lake | 701-665-2200 | 888-607-8610 |
| Grand Forks | 701-795-3000 | 888-256-6742 |
| Fargo | 701-298-4500 | 888-342-4900 |
| Jamestown | 701-253-6300 | 800-260-1310 |
| Bismarck | 701-328-8888 | 888-328-2662 |
| Dickinson | 701-227-7500 | 888-227-7525 |